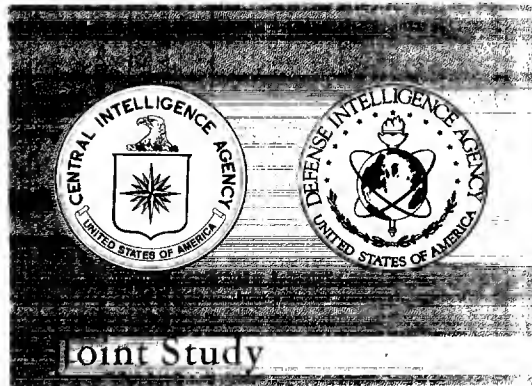


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Weekly Survey of Communist Military Developments in Indochina

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April 17, 1974

Fifty-Ninth Report

**WEEKLY SURVEY
OF COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS
IN INDOCHINA***

(This report covers the period April 10-16, 1974)

The Key Points

- No new infiltration groups were detected entering the pipeline in North Vietnam during the past week – the first time since September that there has been such a break. Moreover, COMINT indicates that probably no new groups will pass through the Vinh area for the remainder of April.
- In Cambodia the KC have received another large military aid delivery from the North Vietnamese. The first indications that some logistic units in southern Laos may be making preparations for the rainy season were noted.
- COMINT [REDACTED] indicates that the 29th NVA Regiment of the 324B NVA Infantry Division is preparing to move from South Vietnam's MR 1 to the MR 2 central highlands. In addition, COMINT indicates that [REDACTED] a battalion of the NVA's 29th Regiment of the 968th NVA Infantry Division had departed southern Laos and was operating in MR 2.
- The latest reconnaissance mission over North Vietnam provided coverage of most major areas of military and economic interest. The mission showed no evidence of significant military imports or unusual movements along the major transport system. [REDACTED]

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* This report has been prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.

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Preface

This report is the fifty-ninth in a series summarizing evidence received during the reporting period of (I) Communist efforts to infiltrate new manpower and military supplies toward and into South Vietnam, (II) significant Communist combat activity, and (III) other developments affecting Communist military capabilities in Indochina.

DETAILS

I. Infiltration and Redeployments of North Vietnamese Personnel and Military Supplies

Personnel Infiltration

1. For the first time since last September, no new regular infiltration groups were detected moving southward in the pipeline. This phenomenon, which is in contrast to the heavy flow of troops observed during the past several months, probably will continue through at least the end of the month. On April 12, an intercepted message from Group 174 in North Vietnam indicated that "no southbound troops" would be arriving at a subordinate communications-liaison station "from now until the end of the month." This station has been an important link in the southward movement of troops in the Vinh area, suggesting that at least a temporary stand-down in troop infiltration, rather than the bypassing of the facility, has occurred.

2. In a possibly related development, a "military administration conference" of Group 174 was held in Hanoi on April 12 and 13. Although few details of the conference are known, command personnel from all communications-liaison stations, wounded troop transfer stations, and vehicle companies reportedly were to attend the conference. Because of the large number of infiltrators sent south since the beginning of the year, it is possible that the North Vietnamese are winding down troop infiltration in the 1973/74 cycle. Further evidence, however, will be required to substantiate this judgment. In contrast to the movement of troops, special-purpose infiltration continues to be observed -- four groups with about 100 personnel were detected moving south last week, three to COSVN and one to the B-3 Front.

Comparative Starts of Troops from North Vietnam, by Destination September 1 - Apr 16

| | 1972-73 | 1973-74 |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Total | 86,000 | 78,500 |
| MR Tri-Thien | 26,000 | 2,000 |
| MR 5 | 9,000 | 8,500 |
| B-3 Front | 14,000 | 9,500 |
| COSVN | 26,000 | 36,000 |
| Southern Laos/MR 559 | 11,000 | 22,500 |

3. Collateral evidence indicates that infiltrators continue to arrive in the COSVN area a month or less after passing through Vinh, North Vietnam. [redacted] Group 2036 -- which transited the Vinh area in late December -- was assigned to the NVA 5th Division in MR 3 in January. Based on this group's experience, it appears that little, if any, additional training in South Vietnam is being given to troops infiltrating the COSVN area before their integration into regular combat units.

Redeployments

4. COMINT of mid-April suggests that the 29th NVA Regiment of the 324B NVA Infantry Division is preparing to deploy from South Vietnam's MR 1 to the central highlands of MR 2. The regiment was observed communicating with the Headquarters, B-3 Front on April 12 and 13. It continues to communicate, however, with its division headquarters and the High Command of the Armed Forces of North Vietnam. This communications pattern has traditionally been an indicator of a unit's impending deployment. The regiment was last located in Thua Thien Province of MR 1 on January 9. There are no indications that the 324B Division's other regiments are planning to move. If the 29th Regiment does move to the highlands of MR 2, it will augment Communist forces there by some 2,000 men and may portend additional heavy fighting near Kontum and Pleiku cities before the rains begin in June.

5. Recent COMINT indicates that by late March a battalion of the NVA 29th Independent Infantry Regiment had relocated from southern Laos to Darlac Province in South Vietnam's central highlands. The relocation, which follows similar moves by the NVA 9th Infantry and 232nd Antiaircraft Artillery Regiments in January is apparently intended to further strengthen Communist positions in the highlands where GVN forces are currently threatening Communist Route 14. Although the 29th Regiment's other three battalions may eventually relocate to South Vietnam, their pattern of communications reflects no sign of an impending move and the units continue to operate in the general Muong Phalane area of the Laotian Panhandle. Moreover, the 19th Infantry Regiment of the NVA 968th Division, which as previously reported is in a deploying status, remains in the Panhandle.

Movement of Military Equipment and Supplies

North Vietnam

6. Currently available COMINT from rear service elements indicates that no military cargo moved through the Vinh area during the reporting period. Coastal shipping in this area, however, remains heavy. Furthermore,

comparative analysis of recent photography of major coastal and inland transshipment points in the Panhandle indicates that the movement of supplies has continued. Also, the delivery of foodstuffs and construction material by Soviet merchant ships to the Ben Thuy area has been heavy and can be expected to increase further during April-June if the Soviets are to meet their plans for delivery scheduled to North Vietnam during the first half of 1974.

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Laos

7. Substantial logistic activity apparently continued in Laos during the week, although the lack of COMINT intercepts and limited aerial reconnaissance of the main supply corridor in Laos again made it difficult to measure the level of activity. Although only partial photographic coverage of the main route structure from Tehepone to the tri-border area was received, more than 200 trucks were observed moving on Route 99 south of Moung Nong, suggesting that the actual level of activity throughout the Panhandle is high (see the transportation map).

8. Logistic activity in southern Laos may be tapering off in a few weeks. The first indications that logistic units in the Laotian Panhandle may be preparing for the rainy season were received on April 5, when plans were received to clean out the remaining cargo at some Group 472 storage areas. On that date an official of Group 472 stated that one of its subordinate units had been assigned a 31-day mission, apparently consisting of moving the remaining cargo out of various unspecified storage areas in southern Laos into South Vietnam. With the Communists' western supply corridor in South Vietnam apparently fully operational now, however, reduced use of the logistic corridor in Laos should have little effect on North Vietnamese ability to move supplies into and through South Vietnam in the months ahead.

Cambodia

9. An intercepted Khmer Communist (KC) message of April 12 indicates that the KC have received another large military aid delivery from the North Vietnamese. The shipment -- totaling 450 tons -- was received between March 25 and April 8 and included more than 5 million AK-47 rounds, about 26,000 B-40/B-41 rockets, and 500 107-mm rockets in addition to substantial quantities of recoilless rifle and mortar ammunition.

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10. Coupled with deliveries between late December and early March, which may have totaled 1,300 tons of materiel and nearly 500 trucks, this

Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

South Vietnam

Regular Combat Forces

| | | MR 1 | |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| VC/NVA ¹ | RVNAF ² | VC/NVA | RVNAF |
| 182,000 | 372,000 | 84,000 | 103,000 |
| | | 325th | VNMC |
| | | 324B | Airborne |
| | | 304th | 1st |
| | | 111th | 2nd |
| | | 2nd ³ | 3rd |
| | | 673rd AAA | Regional Forces |

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.

2. RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes assigned personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions. Although present for duty strength is no longer available, it is estimated to be about 85% of assigned strength.

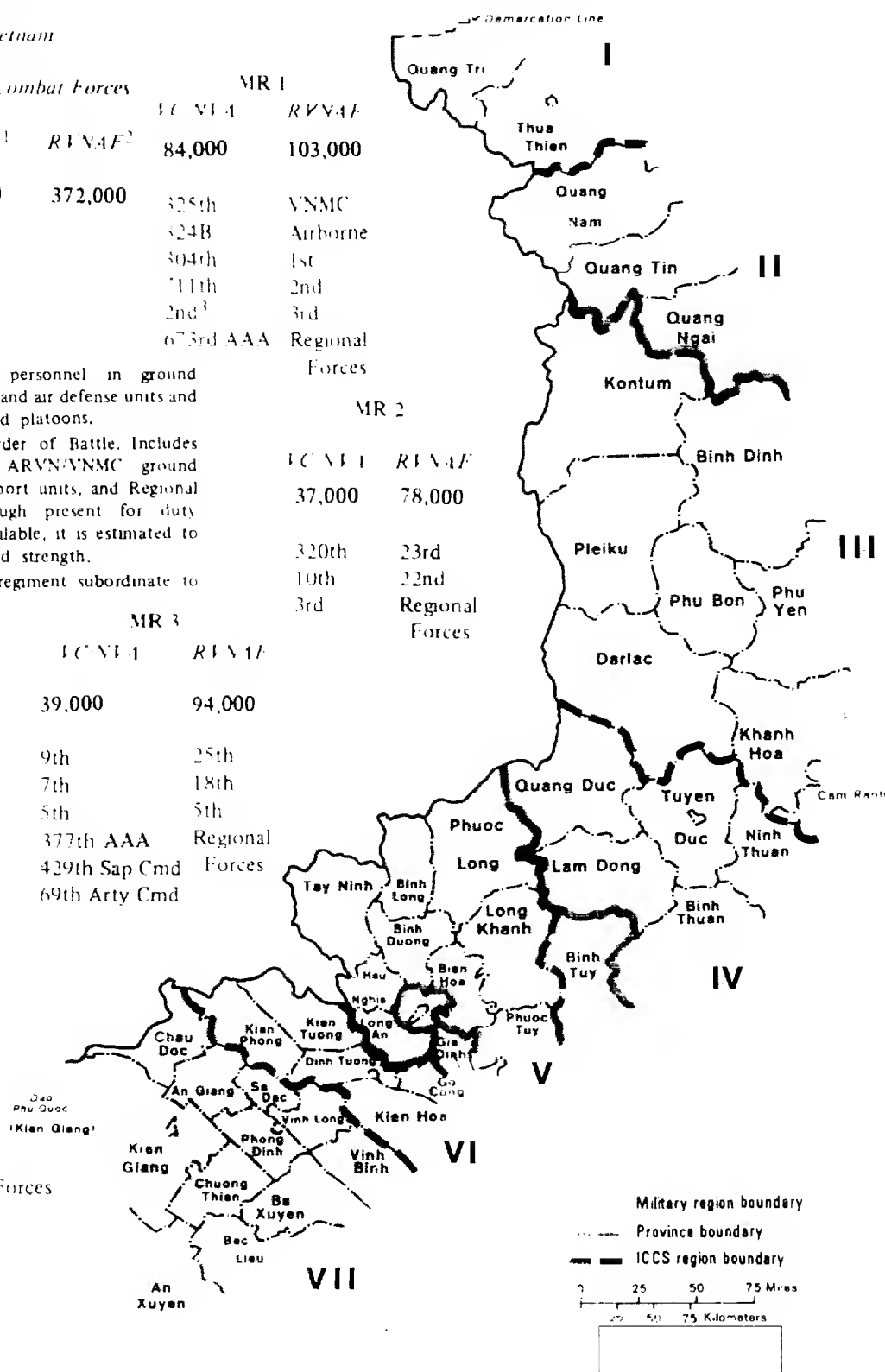
3. Only one infantry regiment subordinate to the division.

MR 3

| VC/NVA | RVNAF |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 39,000 | 94,000 |
| 9th | 25th |
| 7th | 18th |
| 5th | 5th |
| 377th AAA | Regional Forces |
| 429th Sap Cmd | |
| 69th Arty Cmd | |

MR 4

| VC/NVA | RVNAF |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 22,000 | 97,000 |
| 1st ³ | 21st |
| | 9th |
| | 7th |
| | Regional Forces |



delivery should preclude any KC shortages this year, if effectively distributed. Moreover, the continued influx of heavy weapons will give the lightly armed KC an expanded offensive capability.

South Vietnam

11. Limited photography of the Communists' western supply corridor during the week showed that at least sections of the road are in good condition and apparently sustaining some traffic. On April 10, more than 50 trucks were observed moving south on Route 548, and a similar number were parked along the road. To the south on Route 613, field analysis of photography of April 11 indicates that the road is in good condition and supporting some truck traffic, although no vehicles were observed on this particular mission. COMINT provided no information on the type of cargo moving along the western supply corridor during the week.

II. Significant Communist Combat Activity

12. Overall Communist cease-fire violations continued to decrease, with an average of 78 daily last week compared with the previous week's 90. Communist casualties increased from 90 to 123 a day, while government losses declined from 29 to 25. Most incidents continued to be minor. However, three major incidents occurred during the week. In MR 2, a Communist attack on April 11 against an ARVN position some 20 miles southwest of Pleiku City resulted in almost 200 Communists reported killed. Additional contacts on April 15 and 16 south of the provincial capital resulted in ARVN losses of 61 killed, 76 wounded, and 85 missing and 15 armored personnel carriers and two 155-mm howitzers destroyed. More than 500 Communist troops were reported killed. In MR 3, the ARVN ranger camp at Tonle Cham in Tay Ninh Province was evacuated on April 11 after a 900-round barrage and a ground attack. The isolated position had been receiving intermittent shellings since the January cease-fire. The loss of this base provides the Communists freer movement along an infiltration corridor from Cambodia into South Vietnam.

III. Other Developments Affecting Communist Military Capabilities in Indochina

Repositioning of North Vietnamese and ARVN Forces in MR 2 Highlands

13. COMINT indicates that the entire NVA 10th Infantry Division, reinforced with supporting artillery and local forces (some 9,000 troops), is now concentrated northeast of Kontum City. Heavy attacks in that area on March 16-17 and on April 2 apparently were designed to protect Communist lines of communication. ARVN and Regional Force units in the area (8,000 troops) have been reinforced with an additional ranger group

[redacted]

and elements of another regiment of the ARVN 22nd Infantry Division. To the south, major elements of the NVA 593rd Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment are deploying to forward positions southeast of Pleiku City and coordinating with units of the 320th NVA Infantry Division in apparent preparation for increased combat. Such activity probably would be designed to expand Communist territory near Pleiku City and could be coordinated with attacks by Communist units in Kontum Province.

14. The move of North Vietnamese units closer to Kontum and Pleiku Cities probably portends more fighting in the area. Although the Communists could expect some success from increased combat, it is doubtful that they will launch the sustained, heavy attacks necessary to capture either provincial capital without additional reinforcements (see the map on Communist and South Vietnamese regular combat forces).

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[redacted] *Photographic Mission*
over North Vietnam

15. The latest SR-71 mission over North Vietnam provided poor to fair quality photography of most major areas of military and economic interest -- haze and cloud cover were the primary degrading factors. Except

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[redacted]
harbor, the mission showed no apparent recent military imports or unusual movement along the main transport system. Shipping activity in Haiphong port, however, was noticeably higher than during last November and December. Inventories in the major weapon and vehicle parks remain high. Finally, major construction activity was evident at several points within North Vietnam.

Military Storage and Training Areas

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16. [redacted] photography covered the Dong Dang/P'ing-hsiang border crossing points but provided no evidence of recent military imports. The SA-3 canisters and equipment that were located west of Dong Dang [redacted] have been removed and the facility vacated. This equipment presumably has been sent to the Hanoi area in support of the deployed SA-3 sites there.

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17. Similarly, no military equipment was observed in the large vehicle storage areas between Hanoi and Dong Dang at the China border. The number of vehicles in the larger parks remains at around 2,400 at Chuc Quang and 1,800 at Dong Dang. Although the parking patterns show some turnover of inventory, the totals [redacted]

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18. There was a possible increase of at least 100 antiaircraft pieces at the Trieng Xen Artillery Parks, located about 35 miles southwest of

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[redacted]



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Hanoi. This addition increases the number of pieces at this storage depot to 365, most of which are light antiaircraft weapons. Some of the increase at Trieng Xen probably came from the Ban Dat railroad siding near Thai Nguyen, where more than 200 antiaircraft weapons seen last November have been removed. In addition, some 36 probable 122-mm field artillery pieces were noted at Trieng Xen.

19. For the Vinh Yen Armored Training Center northwest of Hanoi, the quality of the photography was poor and revealed about 130 possible pieces of armor.

20. Farther south in the Panhandle, some 90 tanks and armored personnel carriers were observed at the Luong Dien Armor Area 30 miles south of Thanh Hoa. About the same number of tanks and armored personnel carriers were in these parks on December 31. The area now appears to be a permanent installation with equipment dispersed in company-size groups.

Merchant Shipping Activity

21. The level of shipping was higher than usual at Haiphong. About 25 merchant ships and tankers were observed in or near the port, compared with some 14 on January 31.

Major Construction Activity

22. P'ing-hsiang Petroleum Storage: Construction on the large oil storage area 5 miles north of the P'ing-hsiang rail yard has progressed since January. Six 80-foot-diameter base plates have been completed, and areas are being prepared for at least four more tanks of smaller diameter. A new pipeline trench is being constructed from the storage area several miles southward, apparently heading toward the two existing storage areas and pipeline serving North Vietnam.

23. Red River Rail Transshipment Point: Construction on the Red River rail transshipment point northwest of Hanoi is continuing. Rail has been laid for three miles down the spur, and the footings have been poured for four large warehouses. When finished, this large facility should ease rail congestion and will promote transport between Haiphong Port, Hanoi, and rail-served industrial points in the northeast.

24. Bridge Building: The 430-foot, two-lane suspension bridge over the Lach Tray River just south of Haiphong has been rebuilt and replaces the existing ferry. It provides improved access from the north to Kien An and its airfield. (Paragraphs 15 - 24 --



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North Vietnam: Population Census

25. North Vietnam this week completed its first population census since 1960. Although the results may not be available for some time, this probably is an initial effort by Hanoi to cope with resource problems that were suppressed during the war because of mobilization priorities and ample foreign commodity aid. North Vietnamese spokesmen during the past few months, however, have made a series of statements expressing Hanoi's concern over rapid population growth. In addition, the regime has announced some ambitious economic goals for 1974 and has stated its intent to start a long-term plan for 1976-80. No specific goals for the long-term plan have yet been reported, but the census undoubtedly will enable Hanoi to plan more effectively for its future economic, as well as military, requirements.

26. Our current estimate of North Vietnam's population is 20.1 million, based on US Census Bureau projections using a trend growth rate of 2.5% that is then reduced for wartime casualties. Party Leader Le Duan, however, in a February 11 speech to the National Trade Union Congress said the population had gone up more than 10 million in the period 1960-73. This would result in a total population of 26 million (based on the 16 million estimated in the 1960 census) and would imply an average annual growth rate of 3.8%. Although the Census Bureau rejects this figure as being excessively high given the heavy civilian and military losses since 1965, it recognizes the possibility that the 1960 census may have undercounted the population by as much as 15%, thus causing a similar shortfall in our current estimates.

Communist Rice Collection and Civilian Resettlement Gain Momentum in South Vietnam' Lower Delta

27. South Vietnamese province chiefs in the southern Delta generally agree that Communist efforts to collect rice following the fall-winter harvest have been fairly successful. Although stringent government controls designed to limit Communist procurement activities have been applied countrywide since last August, the abundance of rice in the Delta and the ability of rear service cadre to circumvent South Vietnamese controls have enabled the Communists there to obtain more than enough rice to meet their immediate needs. For example, in the lower Delta provinces of Kien Giang, Phong Dinh, and Vinh Long, the South Vietnamese province chiefs all state that the Communists have acquired sufficient rice to support additional forces in these areas.

28. In An Xuyen Province on the southern tip of the Delta, the Communists have complemented their successful rice collection campaign by extending their control over the civilian population. According to the province chief, South Vietnamese control is now generally limited to areas

surrounding the provincial and six district capitals. He added that the Communists have constructed several "model villages" to induce civilian resettlement, and that the population in these villages had increased from less than 10,000 last October to well over 20,000 by March. The easy access to civilians is enabling the Communists to procure large volumes of rice in the province, much of which is used to help feed Communist main force units in neighboring Chuong Thien Province. Despite their gains in An Xuyen, however, Communist success in civilian resettlement and control programs is not widespread. In the Delta, the ability of the Communists to attract significant numbers of civilians into areas under their control probably is largely confined to An Xuyen and adjacent Kien Giang Province, where Communist influence has always been strong.

ANNEX

INFILTRATION OF NORTH VIETNAMESE PERSONNEL
TO THE SOUTH

Since the implementation of the cease-fire settlement for South Vietnam on January 27, 1973, about 144,000 North Vietnamese troops and specialists have infiltrated southward. Some 119,000 of this total have started south since that time. Since June 15, 1973, when the original accord was reaffirmed, about 93,000 troops and specialists have been sent south. The following table shows the number of North Vietnamese troops starting south, by destination, since January 1, 1973.

**Number of Troops Entering the Pipeline Destined
for South Vietnam, Southern Laos, and Cambodia
Since January 1, 1973¹**

| | COSVN | B-3 Front | MR 5 | MR Tri- Thien | Southern Laos/ MR 559 | Total |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Total 1973 | 49,000 | 15,000 | 15,500 | 14,000 | 26,500 | 120,000 |
| Jan-Mar | 12,000 | 5,500 | 4,000 | 5,000 | 1,000 | 27,500 |
| Apr-Jun | 1,000 | ... | ... | 7,000 | 1,500 | 9,500 |
| Jul-Aug | ... | ... | 3,000 | ... | 1,500 | 4,500 |
| Sep | ... | ... | 2,000 | 2,000 | 3,000 | 7,000 |
| Oct | ... | ... | ... | ... | 14,000 | 14,000 |
| Nov | 1,000 | 1,000 | ... | ... | 5,500 | 7,500 |
| Dec | 3,500 | 1,000 | ... | ... | ... | 4,500 |
| 1974 | | | | | | |
| Jan | 10,000 | 3,000 | ... | ... | ... | 13,000 |
| Feb | 5,500 | 1,500 | 1,500 | ... | ... | 8,500 |
| Mar | 12,000 | 2,000 | 4,500 | ... | ... | 18,500 |
| Apr 1-16 | 4,000 | 1,000 | 500 | ... | ... | 5,500 |

1. Excluding special-purpose personnel. The totals are rounded to the nearest 500.

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